

*Abstract of the Disclosure*

[0020] A quick and efficient method of disbursing system “alerts” and “updates” to computers utilizes automated IM messages that are sent to targeted IM groups, where the groups are “targeted” by a system administrator based upon the definitions of the various IM groups. The automated IM will appear as a “pop up” to each IM session member in real time, and may include a “trailer” defining the message as automated and thereby not allowing the IM members to respond (other than to acknowledge receipt, if desired). The system administrator may also include a listing of email addresses for the various members of each IM group, where an email message including the update/alert may be sent to any IM group member not involved in an IM session when the automated IM message is sent.